UNITED
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E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1998/SR.43
30 June 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session for 1998

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 43rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 27 July 1998, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh)
(Vice-President)

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IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 50/227 AND 52/12 B

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS 50/227 AND 52/12 B (continued)

Mr. DESAI (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) noted that the partnerships between the Economic and Social Council and the Bretton Woods institutions had recently been further strengthened, as demonstrated by the coordinating and support role played by the latter at United Nations conferences. The United Nations and the World Bank had worked to support intergovernmental decision-making, promote interaction and increase efficiency. The Bank's support for the financing of the development process was reflected in a cooperative atmosphere which he hoped would continue.

Mr. AHMED (Associate Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) stressed that the report of the Secretary-General reviewing cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (E/1998/61) had presented a number of specific recommendations on how those institutions could effectively complement each other's action in the context of the priorities established by their respective member States. The report sought to be forward-looking, exploring ways to strengthen existing partnerships and better serve the needs of countries receiving support. The context for future cooperation would remain country-driven and guided overall by national priorities and objectives. In that regard, he wished to highlight some of the key findings of the review.

First, there had already been extensive collaboration in the past, which warranted greater appreciation, in each of the areas mentioned in resolution 50/227: the implementation of United Nations conferences, the collection and dissemination of data, analyses and reports, the use of existing resources in the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development, the provision of technical assistance in the field, intergovernmental and secretariat consultations and policy dialogue. Second, the different mandates and rules of the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations bodies enriched policy and programme support at the country level in the areas of economic and social development. The goal must therefore be overall agreement

on strategic objectives and a common understanding that all were moving towards the same goals while maintaining a healthy diversity of approach and policy choices. Third, although global policy and operational matters needed to be discussed and agreed upon at headquarters level, coordination was often best organized at the country level in response to precise governmental requests. The decentralization of decision-making authority and staff would undoubtedly further enhance cooperation initiated at the country level. Governments could also maximize the benefits of assistance programmes by encouraging and even insisting upon cooperation. Finally, the strengthening of the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions should be based on the building of strategic partnerships which capitalized on each organization's intrinsic strengths, reflected shared goals and objectives and built upon existing achievements. Such strategic partnerships should also take into account capacity-building, which strengthened national ownership of the policy agenda and included all stakeholders.

The report concluded with a set of 17 concrete recommendations on strengthening collaboration at both the global and country levels, stressing collaborative initiatives which could be undertaken without creating elaborate new coordination mechanisms and which would contribute to the building of a constructive and productive partnership for the benefit of the countries served. The Council might wish to take note of the progress made in cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and encourage further collaboration along the lines suggested in the recommendations.

Mr. SFEIR-YOUNIS (Special Representative of the World Bank) said that the Bank had demonstrated its firm commitment to cooperation and partnership with the Council by participating in each and every Council session since 1997 and by continuing its direct collaboration with the Second Committee of the General Assembly on issues relating to the financing of development. He pointed out that the Bank had also participated in the April 18 meeting of the Council which, in his opinion, had been a landmark event and a major success.

The World Bank respected and valued the work of the Council and planned to significantly increase dissemination of the Council's findings to all levels of decision-making within the Bank. In that context, most of the recommendations of the joint review were being addressed, facilitating focus on a large number of cooperation-related issues raised in the Council.

He agreed with the 17 recommendations resulting from the joint review, which should make for effective development at the country level. The Bank had shared its views on almost all the recommendations with the Council, in the seminar series and through participation in the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. It had also participated in the United Nations workshop in Turin the preceding December focusing on the implementation of global conferences, which had led to better understanding of the views of United Nations staff and the resident coordinators. As follow-up, the Bank had been invited to speak at the orientation seminar for resident coordinators at the end of September 1997.

Three fundamental principles must be adhered to for effective implementation of the recommendations. First, cooperation agreements must reflect the real needs and priorities of the client countries. Second, since the countries themselves paid the costs of cooperation, the Bank and the United Nations, as trustees for those resources, must ensure that cooperation was cost-effective, maximized comparative advantage and respected the diversity of mandates within a set of commonly shared goals. That diversity was essential to attaining the development objectives, represented major insurance against a one-size-fits-all approach, and was the key ingredient of healthy dialogue and respect for other viewpoints. The essential role played by each organization's mandate in improving the effectiveness of the development process must be understood. Third, value systems should be reoriented to take into account the realities of the next millennium when defining different modes of cooperation; the economic realities facing developing countries could not be ignored and alternative forms of cooperation must take into account economic and financial value systems, as well as political, cultural, social, ethical, moral and spiritual values.

He strongly believed that in most areas effective cooperation was indeed taking place; tension and problems created by inter-institutional adjustments were a necessary condition and should be fully supported as an acknowledgement of the fact that major changes were under way in the paradigm of development, changes which were forcing all development institutions to adjust in an organic and a dynamic way. In the final analysis, the most fundamental ingredients to effective cooperation were leadership and mutual trust; technology, reports and meetings gained true meaning only when the human factor was the focus of

attention.

Mr. KHAN (Officer-in-Charge for ECOSOC Support and Coordination) said that the Council had made steady progress in enhancing the effectiveness of its working methods.

For the first time, in an effort to strengthen its oversight and management role, the Bureau had held joint meetings with the bureaux and the secretariats of the functional commissions. In order to ensure implementation by the United Nations system of the outcomes presented by the Council, the agreed conclusions of the high level and coordination segments for 1997 had been transmitted to all the functional commissions as well as to the specialized agencies, funds and programmes. For the substantive session of July 1998, the Bureau had instituted the practice of adopting an outcome at the end of each segment: a joint ministerial communiqué had, for example, been adopted by the Council at the end of the high-level segment, for the first time. The special high-level meeting held on 18 April 1998 with the Bretton Woods institutions, at which long-term development needs had received as much attention as immediate and short-term financial and monetary stability, had highlighted the Council's advantage as a forum for developing an integrated view of the social and economic aspects of policies.

At its May session the Council had held its first humanitarian affairs segment, thus establishing its oversight role in that important area. The review of the Council's subsidiary bodies had resulted in an agreement on specific measures to streamline and improve the working methods of the Council's subsidiary machinery and had been a major step forward in meeting desired outcomes.

The Council had also sought better communication with the regional commissions, and the executive secretaries of those commissions had been invited to New York for informal briefing sessions regarding the reform process in their respective commissions. It had intensified its relationship with the Advisory Committee on Coordination (ACC).

Following the informal consultations on the organization and working methods of the Council, it had been agreed that the issue of holding the various segments separately would be considered at a later date, taking into account the experience of 1998. With regard to the Council's managerial and oversight functions, organization of the general segment would need to be reexamined.

Perhaps its main focus should be to provide guidance to the subsidiary bodies, paying greater attention to the linkages between their reports. A first attempt had been made by identifying the linkages between the outcomes of the functional commissions. Although the operational activity segment was well organized and functioned effectively, expectations in the area of providing guidance on cross-cutting issues, including resources, had not been met. On the other hand, concensus had been reached on a draft resolution on new reporting arrangements for the funds and programmes which should enable the Council to make further progress in that regard. The Council needed to further examine its interactions with the specialized agencies based on recent positive developments such as the panel discussions and global conference task forces.

He pointed out that the Secretary-General's report contained a number of recommendations which were intended to promote the process of revitalization, and he stressed the Secretariat's full commitment to supporting the Council's efforts.

Ms. SINGGIH (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group of 77 and China realized that further in-depth discussion of some of those recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (E/1998/61) was necessary in the areas of cooperation which fell within the purview of the Bretton Woods institutions.

The high-level meeting between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions in April had proved the value of the Council's coordinating role in addressing core economic issues; the recent Asian economic crisis, for example, had increased awareness of the need for global solutions to such problems. Her delegation was therefore of the view that since General Assembly resolution 50/227 provided a clear mandate for periodic meetings of that kind, continued efforts to organize such meetings must be encouraged.

Mr. MANZ (Observer for Austria) speaking on behalf of the European Union and the associate countries of Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romanian, Slovakia and Slovenia, said that the European Union considered that the proliferation of the subsidiary machinery of the Economic and Social Council had weakened the Council's role as instrument of overall guidance and coordination. It therefore attached great importance to the review process mandated in Resolution 50/227 and Resolution 52/12B.

It welcomed the streamlining of the Council's four priority bodies and

hoped that the recommendations would ensure a better use of the potential of the functional commissions with responsibilities for following up on the United Nations conferences by focusing them on implementation of the conference results and monitoring progress. The review process should now be completed as soon as possible and an evaluation of the effectiveness of the new arrangements should be carried out in the year 2001.

Although progress had been made on the implementation of Resolution 50/227, the number of Second Committee resolutions should be further reduced and the Committee's working methods revised, reporting requirements needed to be simplified, and the agenda of the general segment of the Economic and Social Council's agenda should be streamlined.

The European Union attached particular importance to close collaboration between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions at Headquarters and, in particular, at the field level. Such collaboration should respect the relative competencies and make full use of the comparative advantages of each body.

With regard to the Development Dividend, the European Union welcomed the intention to use the funds for programmes focusing on global, interregional and regional issues with an emphasis on helping developing countries to implement commitments arising from United Nations conferences. However, activities should be sustainable, well conceived and guided by a bottom-up approach.

Mr. SHEN Guofang (China) drew attention to some of the elements of the Council's current review of its subsidiary bodies that deserved attention, noting that while a satisfactory rate of progress had been achieved in enhancing the efficiency of those bodies, time was required to test the new reform measures once they had been put in practice. He stressed however, that without adequate resources no reform plan could achieve the objective of revitalizing the role of the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

Mr. KOLBY (Observer for Norway) said that translating the mandates of the global conferences into operational activities in cooperation with Member States was a major challenge for the United Nations system. Strengthening coherence and coordination within the United Nations system would reinforce its relevance and impact.

The increased emphasis on dialogue during the Council's deliberations promoted understanding and, combined with the increased attention to cross-

cutting issues and the follow-up to global conferences, helped to strengthen the Council's coordination role. The increased policy dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions was also welcomed, but there was greater scope for cooperation with those institutions at the country level.

The inclusion of a humanitarian segment during the Council's substantive session reflected its recognition that the relevance and impact of the United Nations system was linked to its efforts to address global issues of concern to all populations. Nevertheless, the system's capacity to address major issues in the social and economic field needed to be strengthened. Efforts should focus on further reinforcing the linkages between the work of the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. The Council should be empowered to carry out its coordination role through measures such as improved reporting and stronger links between the funds and programmes and the specialized agencies as well as the Bretton Woods institutions needed to be developed. Lastly, more coherent country-level efforts should be based on a thematic approach and the establishment of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) were important steps in promoting such an approach.

The motive for reforming and improving the United Nations system in the economic and social fields was to improve its relevance and impact. However, those goals could not be achieved without the necessary funding. Commitment to a strong and effective system should be coupled with increased resources from all members, according to their capacity.

Mr. Dae Won SUH (Republic of Korea) said that increasing the efficiency of the United Nations should ultimately lead to enhancing the overall impact and effectiveness of its development activities, provided that there was sufficient funding. Resolution 50/227 had provided a substantial impetus to revitalizing the United Nations role in development cooperation. Reform measures had helped to avoid duplication of activities and increased the Organization's relevance in meeting changing global economic and social challenges.

The agreement reached in the Council to reconfigure the four priority subsidiary bodies should increase the effectiveness and efficiency with which the United Nations dealt with areas such as natural resources, energy, science and technology. It was essential to harmonize the work programmes of the

Council's functional commissions to avoid overlap; the best practices of the commissions' working methods should be disseminated, and the Council should fully utilize its comparative advantage for cross-cutting issues and exercise its policy guidance role. The regional commissions should continue to be vigilant in responding to the changing needs of Member States, taking into account shifting economic and social trends and the changing regional and institutional landscape. Coordination should be strengthened among all the actors at the country and regional level. Holding separate sessions for specific themes would be a particularly useful way to enhance the effectiveness of the Council's coordination role.

In order for cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions to achieve common objectives, concerted efforts should be made to enhance policy dialogue as well as to coordinate the respective operational activities at the country level. Moreover, in order to enhance complementarity efforts should be made to strengthen inter-agency consultation using the resident coordinator system. Furthermore, such efforts should be extended beyond the United Nations system to other actors such as the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) and the regional development banks.

Mr. MARTÍNEZ-AGUILAR (Mexico) welcomed the consensus reached in informal consultations, in connection with General Assembly resolution 50/227, on the mandates and working methods of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the Committee for Development Planning, the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources - otherwise known as the "Four Friends" - the functional commissions responsible for follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, and the regional commissions.

The Mexican delegation believed that if the Council was to retain a unified perspective and its work was to be coherent, its substantive session must not be broken up or moved around.

Of the Secretary-General's proposals contained in report A/53/137-E/1998/66 the proposal for joint meetings of the Second Committee and the Third Committee seemed premature in light of the provisions of resolution 50/227 on coordination between those main committees.

However, Mexico supported the recommendation on strengthening cooperation

between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions in light of the success of the first high-level meeting they held in April 1998: cooperation between the United Nations and those institutions must be strengthened in order to deal with the adverse effects of volatility in the financial markets, formulate macroeconomic policies that incorporated social development priorities and coordinate the activities of the various organizations in the United Nations system working on development.

Ms. LINDE (United States of America) welcomed the consensus that had emerged from the informal consultations on measures to streamline the "Four friends" and the regional and functional commissions, make their output more useful and encourage coordination and complementarity among them. However, more needed to be done to make those bodies, and the Council itself, more effective and efficient.

However, the United States delegation would have preferred to see the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) take on the responsibilities of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, and believed that the Committee on Development Planning should be converted into an ad hoc panel of experts.

The United States welcomed the attention being given by the Secretariat to the Development Account issue, but had reservations about whether the information technology concept outlined in report E/1998/81 was the most advantageous approach for the beneficiaries of Development Account funds: although the proposed projects complemented existing United Nations work in the development field, the United States believed that they were being given too high a priority and thought that a country-level approach might maximize the return on investment. Indeed, the Secretariat should demonstrate that each proposal contained in report E/1998/81 met the criteria outlined by the Secretary-General in paragraph 3 of document A/52/848.

The United States delegation strongly supported the recommendations in report E/1998/61 on strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions, and would also support a reprise of successful exchanges such as the first high-level meeting between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions of April 1998.

Mr. GERUS (Belarus) supported the proposals for further reform stemming from the informal consultations on streamlining the Council's

subsidiary bodies, particularly those on revitalizing the work of the functional commissions with harmonized multi-year programmes of work, annual reports on prospects for strengthening cooperation on conference follow-up work prepared by the Secretariat and regular coordination meetings between the Council's Bureau and the bureaux of the functional commissions.

The Belarus delegation supported also the recommendations arising out of the review of the work of the regional commissions on increasing their role in system-wide conference and summit follow-up work. It believed that the regional commissions could act as catalysts in implementing international recommendations at the regional level by developing effective mechanisms for cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the relevant specialized agencies.

However, in imposing demands on the regional commissions, the Council should remember that the regional commissions were in a very difficult situation, with far-reaching reforms under way and a lack of financial resources. The effect of the transformations in the regional commissions must on no account be cutbacks in their activities but rather a strengthened capacity for cultivating effective international cooperation in the economic and social areas. In that connection, he noted that the Economic Commission for Europe had almost doubled its membership during the 90s while its funding had remained practically unchanged. The other regional commissions were also having financial difficulties, and he expressed the hope that the situation would be rectified at least partially in the draft budget for the 2000-2001 biennium.

Belarus welcomed the first high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions in April 1998 because, although it was well known that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were not charitable institutions, the resources they could deploy could also provide essential support for United Nations efforts to promote development world wide. Information exchanges and closer cooperation between representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions and the resident coordinator system at the country level would accelerate the process of expanding cooperation with them, but further thought was needed on how to make United Nations/Bretton Woods system-wide cooperation a regular feature.

Mr. KITAZAWA (Japan) said that Japan had supported reinvesting savings from United Nations reforms in development programmes ever since Prime Minister

Hashimoto advocated doing so at the Lyons summit in 1996. Japan had subsequently supported also the Development Account concept. Projects using Development Account money would symbolize the usefulness of the United Nations, and they should be given wide publicity together with the Account: the United Nations should strengthen the support and understanding it received from the international community by demonstrating that it was implementing reforms and that they had tangible results.

Japan supported the general thrust of the information technology project proposals in report E/1998/81 because information technology was vital for development and for developing countries' participation in globalization of the world economy. The Council must therefore think about how to apply the new technologies to promoting development. His delegation took the view that an integrated project to create global networking for development might be more worthwhile than those recommended: even though the rubric was "networking for development", the suggestion on the table was that each organization would implement its project independently.

His delegation singled out the research network for global policy analysis as particularly important because of its role in capacity-building and promoting good governance as part of development. While it welcomed the role of information technology in that project too, he noted the omission from the on-line development centre project proposal that preceded it of a clear explanation of the structure and function of the centre and enough information on which to base an estimate of funding requirements. More details would be needed before the proposals could be discussed in the main committees, including information about how data would be made available to project participants.

Japan welcomed the joint exploratory review of cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (E/1998/61) and encouraged further joint reporting on the subject.

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) said that although his delegation welcomed the reform proposals on reorganizing the work of the General Assembly and the Council and the interactions between the various subsidiary bodies, including the Second and the Third Committees, there were still some gaps and progress had been limited in some areas. In that connection, he associated himself with the views expressed by the Republic of Korea to the effect that implementing new initiatives should not be rushed: the tasks set out in General

Assembly resolution 50/227 must be finished first.

The Russian delegation welcomed recent developments in the Council's work such as the first high-level meeting with the Bretton Woods institutes in April, but opposed any fragmentation of the Council's substantive sessions: the current arrangement was the best, on the understanding that special meetings or sessions would be convened as necessary.

His delegation welcomed also the reforms connected with the work of the "Four Friends" and welcomed the progress in the informal consultations.

He described the joint exploratory review of cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (E/1998/61) as a breakthrough and welcomed the emphasis in the report on strategic approaches to long-term goals. The high-level meeting in April had identified areas where joint efforts needed to be stepped up, and for the future the format and timing of such meetings should be more carefully chosen: there should be a focus on themes or events of interest not just to the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions but to the international community as a whole.

Ms. FAHMY (Observer for Egypt), with reference to the report on utilization of the development dividend (E/1998/81), expressed support for the statement by the representative of Indonesia speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Council was in breach of the Charter in general and General Assembly resolution 52/235 in particular by discussing an issue, the Development Account, that should properly be handled as section 34 of the programme budget by the General Assembly through the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), the Second Committee and the Fifth Committee.

She supported the suggestion by the representative of Japan that the Secretariat should provide more information pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/235 concerning the allocation of financial resources under section 34 of the programme budget so that the CPC, the Second Committee and the Fifth Committee could take informed decisions before the General Assembly resolved the matter fully.

Mr. MAROOF (Pakistan) noted that the report of the Secretary-General on the utilization of the development dividend (E/1998/81) had been prepared in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 52/235, in which the Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to submit proposals on the use of

the funds available under a new section 34 of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. His delegation would reserve its substantive comments on the report for a later stage.

Mr. HANSON-HALL (Observer for Ghana), supported by Mr. ENRICO (Argentina) and Mr. RAVOU-AKII (Observer for Vanuatu), said that the Secretary-General's report should first be considered by the appropriate intergovernmental bodies.

Ms. DULCE BUERGO (Cuba) said that the Council should refrain from giving its views on the report of the Secretary-General until such time as the General Assembly decided on the criteria which should govern the utilization of the Development Account.

Ms. SINGGIH (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, asked how the Bretton Woods institutions in general and the World Bank in particular dealt with the issue of linking human rights and development, since human rights did not fall within the purview of the Bretton Woods institutions. She also wished to know what steps were being taken to strengthen the relationship between the senior staff of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions within the framework of existing aid coordination mechanisms.

Mr. MANZ (Observer for Austria) strongly supported the Secretary-General's recommendation that the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions should work increasingly with the Development Assistance Committee of OECD in the elaboration and use of standard socio-economic indicators for monitoring progress and that country-level cooperation in social indicators and monitoring should be emphasized. Given the need for country-level specificity on the one hand and for the coherence of global indicators on the other, it would be useful to know how comparative advantages could be developed by the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions based on country-level realities and how the development of such advantages could fulfil the need for the holistic and comprehensive provision of services. He would also welcome additional information on the value system to which the Special Representative of the Bank had referred earlier.

Mr. SFEIR-YOUNIS (Special Representative of the World Bank) said, with reference to the mainstreaming of human rights in the activities of the World Bank, that the Bank was fully cognizant of the link between human rights and

development and used its comparative advantage to create an enabling environment for the implementation of human rights. It viewed the improvement of public services, eradication of poverty and mainstreaming of gender concerns as the foundation not only of civil rights but also of the right to development and, to that end, it was prepared to collaborate with other United Nations agencies in operational programmes in those fields.

To illustrate the collaboration between the United Nations and the World Bank at the resident coordinator level, he pointed out that senior staff from the United Nations and the Bank, including resident coordinators, attended seminars and workshops designed to enhance coordination in the field. The Bank's technical assistance was increasingly managed on a decentralized basis through an increased number of country offices. Expansion in the field, however, provided the opportunity for streamlined interorganizational coordination mechanisms to ensure synergy and to avoid overlap.

The linking of global and country-level indicators was another key issue. His own experience was in the field of sustainable development and poverty where success in the achievement of global goals was determined by the success of country-level programmes. The Bank was prepared to assist developing countries as well as other institutions in elaborating appropriate criteria for the measurement of progress in that field.

It was essential to adopt a holistic approach to coordination by mainstreaming environmental and gender concerns into projects in the planning stages rather than as add-ons after a project was completed.

Lastly, with regard to value systems, it was important to recognize that the paradigms upon which development choices had been made in the 1960s, 1970s and even the 1980s had changed. In pursuing their reforms, development institutions must therefore take due account of the paradigm shift.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1998/SR.44
30 June 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session for 1998

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 44th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 28 July 1998, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. CHOWDHURY (Vice-President)	(Bangladesh)
(later)	Mr. SYCHOU (Vice-President)	(Belarus)

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(c) REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (continued)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS (continued)

(b) MALARIA AND DIARRHOEAL DISEASES, IN PARTICULAR CHOLERA (continued) (E/1998/L.30)

(f) INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE, 2000 (continued) (E/1998/52; E/1998/L.31)

Mr. SURYO-DI-PURO (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution E/1998/L.30 on malaria and diarrhoeal diseases, in particular cholera. The draft resolution recognized that efforts to combat those diseases were an important element of joint efforts to eradicate poverty and promote development. Accordingly, it appealed to development partners to provide developing countries with financial, medical and technical assistance for that purpose. He hoped that all delegations, particularly those of developed countries, would support the draft resolution.

Ms. SIBAL (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), speaking on agenda item 7(f), said she hoped that the programme of action for the International Year for the Culture of Peace would have a special chapter on woman and armed conflict and that that chapter would include the eleven recommended actions contained in draft resolution IV, section II D, of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/1998/27, pp. 19-20). It further hoped that the issue of women and the promotion of a culture of peace would be included in the mid-decade review of the Beijing follow-up, to be held in the year 2000.

Discussions at the February 1998 session of the Commission on Social Development had highlighted the need to respect each nation's culture in the context of development activities. UNESCO viewed culture as a basic variable in the analysis of poverty and actions for poverty elimination. In that respect, an emphasis was placed on the non-economic causes of poverty, such as ethnic conflict and discrimination.

The PRESIDENT, speaking as the representative of Bangladesh, introduced draft resolution E/1998/L.31. He said that the original sponsors of

the draft resolution had been joined by Cape Verde, Guatemala, Mali, Morocco, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay. The sponsors believed that the draft resolution would make a constructive contribution to activities for the International Year for the Culture of Peace and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS (continued)

(a) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/1998/L.28 and L.29)

Mr. SURYO-DI-PURO (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, introduced draft resolution E/1998/L.28 on the declaration of the year 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism. Since the observance of such a year would foster progress towards the goals of Agenda 21, he hoped that the Council would adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

He then introduced draft resolution E/1998/L.29 on protection against products harmful to health and the environment. The draft resolution was based on the Council's consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the subject (A/53/156-E/1998/78). It was generally understood that the use of chemicals was necessary; the challenge was to make that use environmentally sound, cost-effective and sustainable. Fortunately, there was growing evidence that chemicals could be used with a high degree of safety, particularly through the life-cycle approach, clean technologies and research on safer substitutions. After highlighting the main points of the draft resolution, he invited delegations to submit their suggestions and comments in informal consultations.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (E/1998/59)

(a) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (A/53/38 (Part I); E/1998/10, E/1998/27 and Corr.1, E/1998/46 and E/1998/53; E/1998/NGO/2; E/CN.6/1998/3)

(b) SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (E/1998/26; E/1998/NGO/3)

(c) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (E/1998/30 and Corr.1)

(d) NARCOTIC DRUGS (E/1998/28, A/53/129-E/1998/58; E/INCB/1997/1)

(e) UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (E/1998/7 and 93)

Ms. KING (Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that the Council's coordination segment had the opportunity to expand the issues of women's equality and human rights beyond the specialized realm of women-specific expertise to make them an integral part of all human rights activities in the follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. The implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action was

an essential part of the integrated follow-up to all United Nations conferences.

The note by the Secretary-General on the mid-term review of the implementation of the revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001 (E/1998/10), had been submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women, which had prepared a draft resolution for adoption by the Council. The Committee for Programme and Coordination had also considered the document; its comments were included in the report on its thirty-eighth session (A/53/16 (Part I)).

The Secretary-General's report to the Council on the follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (E/1998/53) provided information designed to facilitate the Council's decision-making and should be read in conjunction with the other two annual reports submitted, respectively, to the Commission on the Status of Women and the General Assembly. Document E/1998/53 reported on the recent activities of the Commission on the Status of Women, the other functional commissions, the regional commissions and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality.

Both reports indicated that Member States and the United Nations system continued to apply a dual strategy of implementing actions to address the Platform's 12 critical areas of concern, on the one hand, and mainstreaming the gender perspective to ensure that women's concerns were addressed explicitly and systematically in all sectoral areas, on the other. That strategy would make it possible to design, implement and monitor all policies and programmes in a way that improved outcomes for women and, ultimately, to achieve gender equality.

Ms. ERTÜRK (Director, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)) introduced the report on the eighteenth session of the INSTRAW Board of Trustees (E/1998/46). At that session, the Board had approved a modest budget of $495,000 for core research and training programmes in 1998-1999. Despite its small budget, the Institute's work programme was ambitious and would contribute significantly to global United Nations efforts towards gender equality. Fundamental administrative measures had been undertaken to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Nevertheless, she feared that those efforts would be insufficient to ensure the Institute's sustainable productivity. Since 1991, the Institute's very existence had been challenged by two types of issues: the nature and level of

funding, and the comparative advantage of the Institute's work within the United Nations system. INSTRAW was funded exclusively by voluntary contributions, which had declined steadily over the years. If the funds projected for 1999 were not received, the implementation of the Institute's work programme would be seriously jeopardized. INSTRAW had never had the secure financial base it needed to recruit sufficient staff to build a strong strategic work programme. Thus, it had had to work within a comparative disadvantage.

Because INSTRAW had a very broad mandate, it had never been able to produce a focused strategic plan outlining its comparative advantage within the United Nations system. Consequently, despite its invaluable contributions in the areas of unpaid work, statistics and indicators and training on environment and sustainable development, its outputs were largely fragmented and dispersed. To facilitate the development of a strategic work plan, INSTRAW intended to hold an inter-agency brainstorming workshop with the chief United Nations entities that dealt with gender issues, as well as an international dialogue on research priorities. Both of those activities would depend on the availability of funds. She would welcome practical guidance from the Council on how INSTRAW could overcome its difficulties. She hoped that all States, recalling the responsibilities that had prompted them to establish INSTRAW, would expand their financial and political support to strengthen the Institute's capacity to perform as a productive member of the United Nations system.

Mr. McCLEAN (Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention) introduced the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control (A/53/129-E/1998/58). As noted in paragraph 4 of the report, the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Control had requested the United Nations International Drug-Control Programme (UNDCP) to organize an external evaluation of the System-Wide Action Plan in 1998. The results of that evaluation would be submitted to the Subcommittee at its September 1998 session. The main item for discussion at that session would be the future direction to be taken by the System-Wide Action Plan, particularly in the light of United Nations reform. The Secretary-General's report also contained information on two additional action plans to be included in the System-Wide Action Plan: one on drugs, imprisonment and alternative sentencing, and the other on drug abuse and trafficking in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Mr. GHODSE (President, International Narcotics Control Board (INCB))

said that the most recent report of INCB (E/INCB/1997/1) had been considered by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-first session. The follow-up to the General Assembly's recent special session on the world drug problem, in which INCB had participated, would be crucial for combating drug abuse and illicit trafficking. Governments should begin immediately to implement action plans to translate their high-level political commitments into reality. In analyzing the results of such actions, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs should acknowledge and support achievements but should also identify shortcomings and offer constructive criticism. The Board would cooperate with the Commission in that task and would use the action plan adopted by the General Assembly as a checklist for assessing the progress made and the problems encountered by Governments in implementing international drug control treaties.

He said that laudable action plans adopted by the General Assembly should not detract from essential treaty functions. The Board was concerned about drug control situations in several countries and had been forced to invoke article 14 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and article 19 of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, which would ultimately lead to a recommendation to the Council to ban imports of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances to those countries. Some of the States in question had improved their drug control measures and cooperation with the Board and it would be for the Council to decide on any further action with respect to a particular situation in a country.

The international community should participate in the public debate on drug abuse and respond to criticism about international drug control activities. The fact that the United Nations had not succeeded in eradicating drug abuse should not lead to the lowering of standards. The fundamental human rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations also extended to the right to be free of and protected from drug abuse, an issue of particular relevance for young people.

Virtually all States had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, thereby committing themselves, inter alia, to protecting children from drug abuse, production and distribution. Drug abuse was not a victimless crime and caused serious harm to individuals and societies. Drug control policies should not, however, infringe human rights or the rule of law but should strike a balance between repression and permissiveness.

The Board had now instituted an internal procedure, in accordance with article 9 of the 1961 Convention, to guarantee the impartiality and disinterestedness of its members, enhancing its credibility and autonomy.

Ms. OGATA (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), introducing the report of her agency (UNHCR)(E/1998/7) said that the nature of displacement was undergoing significant changes. In addition to refugees, the Office had begun to deal with increasing numbers of internally displaced persons, as the number of internal conflicts had grown. That situation called for advanced security measures and the development of a ladder of options. Host Governments bore primary responsibility for the maintenance of law and order in and around refugee camps, and States should be encouraged and assisted in assuming that responsibility. Local capacity-building with an emphasis on prevention was an essential element of any strategy in that area. In more extreme situations, the Office would like to establish with Governments stand-by arrangements for security support, in coordination with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Insecurity in the context of humanitarian operations had an impact on staff safety. A staff member of UNHCR, Vincent Cochetel, was still captivity six months after his abduction, despite all the diplomatic efforts of the Russian and United Nations authorities. His was not an isolated case, unfortunately; it was part of a pattern of deliberate abduction and killings of humanitarian aid workers which had emerged since 1992. She was worried and anguished by the fact that humanitarian staff were working in a less than secure environment. The issue of staff safety must be addressed with vigour and determination. It was encouraging that the Conference of Plenipotentiaries which had adopted the Statute of the International Criminal Court had included violent acts against humanitarian personnel as a war crime.

Another issue currently of concern to her Office was the sustainability of refugee return, an issue which had been brought to the fore by massive repatriation movements to countries which remained deeply divided after conflict, for example, Rwanda or Bosnia and Herzegovina. A comprehensive approach bridging the gap between humanitarian assistance and longer-term development was essential both to achieve reintegration and to help prevent further displacement.

Turning to operational developments, during her extensive travel to Africa

in the past year, she had co-chaired a regional ministerial meeting in Central Africa which had focused on the need to reconcile refugee protection principles with the legitimate security concerns of States. Reintegration of refugees and rehabilitation in refugee-impacted areas were also discussed. Follow-up to that meeting was focusing on more effective protection for refugees, security mechanisms to ensure the civilian and neutral character of camps, and ways to bridge the gap between relief and reconstruction in post-conflict situations. The critical financial situation of UNHCR operations in the Great Lakes region was of deep concern, and its activities in Rwanda were at risk. Crucial activities in the areas of reintegration and reconciliation were not being implemented as planned which carried the danger of a lapse back into instability and a recurrence of displacement.

In West Africa, the hostilities in Sierra Leone had had devastating humanitarian consequences, with well over half a million people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. The humanitarian operation had improved the situation, and if the response to funding needs was adequate and no substantial influx took place, UNHCR should be able to cope with their needs until repatriation became possible. As for repatriation to Liberia, the main constraints were limited absorption capacity inside the country and inadequate transport capacity outside the country. However, up to 53,000 persons had returned in a voluntary repatriation programme since December 1997, and Government census figures indicated that an additional 180,000 had returned spontaneously. The situation in Guinea-Bissau was also a cause for concern, and unless the peace talks were successful, a resumption of conflict could result in a major refugee outflow. The situations in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau showed the importance of a clear regional strategy on refugee issues and post-conflict situations in West Africa.

In the territory of Western Sahara, the Office was proceeding with preparations for the repatriation of Sahrawi refugees as provided for in the settlement plan, but it still faced a number of difficulties, including the formalization of its presence in the territory. On a more positive note, the repatriation of some 135,000 refugees to Mali and Niger had recently been completed, marking the end of a displacement situation which had persisted for four years. Further efforts would focus on ensuring successful reintegration. In the Horn of Africa, the repatriation of Ethiopian refugees from the Sudan and

registration for repatriation of Eritrean refugees had been completed. Recent episodes of insecurity in the region, however, could negatively affect such plans. Insecurity was also affecting Angola, which was worrying given the generally encouraging trend towards peace and stability. The deterioration of the situation since March had led to temporary relocation of staff and suspension of the voluntary repatriation programme.

In recent months, UNHCR and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had signed tripartite Memoranda of Understanding with Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Burundi in order to deal with the cases of refugees moving to and from those countries, and, whenever possible, their repatriation. The provisions of the general Memorandum of Understanding just signed between UNHCR and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, defining a clearer framework of cooperation with the Government, must be implemented as soon as possible.

Turning to Europe, she noted that the situation in Kosovo was deteriorating. UNHCR had strengthened its presence on the ground, and the humanitarian response thus far had been adequate, although access inside Kosovo and the prevailing insecurity in northern Albania constituted major challenges. While UNHCR and its partners stood ready to help victims, however, firm political action was urgently needed to resolve the crisis. More than 1.8 million people were still displaced in the region as a whole.

After reviewing developments in Georgia, South-East Asia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Afghanistan and Central America, she noted that, while no major refugee outflow had occurred in the past year, UNHCR had faced a large number of smaller emergencies. During the past 12 months, over 50 emergency missions had been dispatched to 11 different operations around the world. It was therefore of paramount importance that the preparedness capacity developed in the early 1990s should be maintained. Resources to carry out its responsibilities were essential, and UNHCR continued to be an organization which donors considered worth supporting. It had streamlined its activities wherever possible and had undertaken painful cost-cutting exercises in staffing and programmes. It was for States to find the political impetus necessary to forge solutions to refugee problems. Over 22 million of the world's refugees and dispossessed people counted on that support.

Mr. ARDA (Turkey) said that the report of the INSTRAW Board of

Trustees (E/1998/46) had painted a very gloomy picture of the Institute's crisis. In previous years, talk of merging the Institute with another United Nations development fund had only served to make the situation worse by discouraging contributions from donors. There were those who criticized INSTRAW, blaming its shortcomings on its location, the quality of its output and other factors. However, the problem was not location, but lack of political and financial support. For its part, his Government had increased the level of its voluntary contributions and hoped that INSTRAW would justify that action by taking steps to ensure the Institute's viability.

Mr. HANNESSON (Iceland) said that his delegation fully endorsed the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. TAKAHASHI (Japan) said that any plan of action on drugs, imprisonment and alternative sentencing, as part of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control, should include careful consideration of the variety of punishments and sentencing policies that existed in different countries. There was a need to strike a balance between oppressive measures to deal with drug-related offences and those for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of drug-abusing offenders.

Ms. MONROY (Mexico) expressed her Government's gratitude for the work done by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in accordance with resolution 51/64, as the preparatory body for the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, which had been devoted to the world drug problem. The session had been a democratic and responsible exercise, resulting in the adoption by consensus of a Political Declaration and a Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction.

Successful follow-up and implementation of the commitments undertaken at the session would ensure the realization of the goals set for the years 2003 and 2008, particularly with regard to the creation of a drug-free society. Her delegation was encouraged to note the speedy action taken by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in convening an informal meeting of experts to examine ways of implementing the guiding principles of drug demand reduction. It hoped that the next session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 1999 would produce a plan of action on that topic, since demand was a central element in the drugs chain and therefore in drugs control. The same kind of attention should be paid to programmes for demand reduction as was paid to those

for reduction of supply, alternative development and the fight against illicit drug trafficking. It was vital that such activities were directed in a balanced way at different geographical zones.

Her delegation was concerned about the lack of adequate fundings for implementation of the original plans of action included in the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control, as noted by the Secretary-General (A/53/129-E/1998/58, para. 3), and about the fact that additional plans of action were nevertheless being proposed.

Mr. GARCIA GONZALEZ (El Salvador) expressed his delegation's full support for the valuable contribution INSTRAW was making to women's advancement. INSTRAW should, inter alia, review and further develop its new conceptual framework for the advancement of women and gender equality problems; engage in a process of modernization and identify alternative sources of funds.

With regard to the INSTRAW strategy for the new millennium, his delegation believed that the focus on the advancement of women, perceived as the process of emancipation and gender equality, would complement international activities on behalf of women, together with the commitments contained in the Beijing Platform for Action. The strategy would facilitate truly effective action, taking account of the impact of local and national measures for the advancement of women. The new strategy might lead to fresh efforts by States to promote gender equity at the national level, integrating it into policies on cross-cutting themes such as poverty reduction. There was also a need for greater social investment in issues that affected both men and women, notably, education, health and productive employment.

The Government of El Salvador was fully aware of the fact that a gender-equity based development strategy relied on both economic and cultural integration. The elimination of gender inequity represented a major challenge to be met through activities aimed at men, women, young persons and children. El Salvador's National Plan for Women for the period 1997-1999 incorporated all the elements required to meet that challenge.

Ms. ANDAYANI (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that she was concerned about the Institute's financial situation, which diminished its capacity to implement programmes and research on issues of importance to women. The recommendations of the INSTRAW ad hoc working group, which were listed in paragraph 96 of the report, should help to

increase the Institute's resource base, but further measures were needed to ensure the effective functioning of INSTRAW. For example, without compromising its autonomous status, INSTRAW could enhance its performance through increased cooperation with other United Nations bodies that carried out related activities. The proposed upgrading of its New York Liaison Office would facilitate such cooperation and would help to give INSTRAW a higher profile and to inform the donor community of its work. Many developing countries contributed to the INSTRAW Trust Fund; she encouraged developed countries to follow suit.

Ms. WÖRGETTER (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, although she was concerned about the Institute's insufficient resource base, she was equally concerned about its productivity. The Director and the Board of Trustees of INSTRAW, together with Member States and the ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, should collaborate in helping INSTRAW formulate a comprehensive strategic work plan. She agreed that the Institute's donor base must be broadened. With respect to staffing, she asked how soon the forthcoming vacancy in the Liaison Office would be filled.

Ms. ALVAREZ (Observer for the Dominican Republic) said that decisive and determined action was needed to help INSTRAW resolve its financial problems and work effectively for the advancement of women, particularly in developing countries. The Dominican Republic continued to commit financial resources to the Institute and appealed to other donors to do likewise.

Ms. MALDONADO RISS (Observer for Bolivia) expressed her country's full support for INSTRAW, as the only inter-governmental body to undertake research and training for the advancement of women. The lack of adequate funding for programme implementation effectively denied Member States the services they required from INSTRAW. It was therefore in the interests of all Member States to see that those funds were forthcoming.

Ms. ASHTON (President of the Board of Trustees, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women) said that the Board was profoundly concerned about the inadequate financial and human resources available to INSTRAW and would continue to coordinate with the Director of the Institute in seeking new donors. Despite INSTRAW's best efforts, nothing positive could be achieved without the support of Member States. Member States

should carefully analyse INSTRAW's current predicament and help it to submit proposals for its revitalization to the Council in February 1999.

Ms. ERTÜRK (Director, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women) said that she felt very encouraged by the expressions of support, confirming the need to strengthen the Institute. The time had come to follow up words with actions.

The current P-4 vacancy at the Liaison Office in New York had not yet been advertised, because a decision was pending on proposed changes to the configuration of that Office and the post. If funds were forthcoming at the pledging conference in November 1998, the recruitment for the P-5 and P-4 vacancies would be completed.

Activities to enhance the visibility of the Institute had focused on the quality and relevance of outputs, although the size of the budget and the nature of research itself precluded spectacular results in the short term. The Institute was awaiting decisions on extrabudgetary project proposals submitted to donor States. Without incurring additional costs, it had called, through the INTERNET, for the submission of papers on older persons, in order to put together a book on the subject by 1999. It would contribute, too, to the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, particularly the chapter on migration issues.

INSTRAW made extensive use of electronic communications to expand its outreach, although its access remained limited. It worked through its Liaison Office and in collaboration with other agencies to integrate its work and enhance its visibility at the system level. However, the Council should remember that there were only three persons currently on the INSTRAW staff. Whatever model was adopted for its future development, the Institute could not succeed without additional support.

Mr. SYCHOU (Belarus), Vice President, took the Chair.

Ms. LUBIN (International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres), after commending the work of the Commission for Social Development for its work in developing social indicators for use in the five-year review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, said that adequate food, appropriate shelter, care for children and the elderly and social-psychological support constituted the foundation of a healthy and educated society and deserved equal treatment with health and education in a United Nations social

development policy. She urged the Council to allow the non-governmental organizations concerned to play a role in interpreting local needs and desires to the intergovernmental and inter-agency groups responsible for formulating those policies. She also stressed the importance of keeping social issues at the forefront of the debate on the implementation of the commitments made at United Nations conferences and on the planning of future actions.

Ms. SKELTON (International Movement ATD Fourth World) said that enabling the most disadvantaged to play a useful role in society, as called for in the agreed conclusions on promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons (Commission for Social Development resolution 36/1), depended on whether those people could broadly participate in the process or whether only the most dynamic among them could join in. Her organization was concerned by the current stress on furthering social development by fostering a favourable economic environment and by expanding employment and microcredit programmes, which benefited only the upper and middle levels of the poor. The Commission should be asked to explore solutions for those trapped in extreme poverty and to ensure that microcredit programmes were accompanied by complementary programmes in education and health.

Ms. DAS (International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN)), speaking also on behalf of the Global Policy Forum, said that, although support for various forms of global taxation had been growing in response to the need to generate new and innovative sources of development funding, ISMUN noted with deep concern that the separate agenda item on new and innovative funding mechanisms had disappeared entirely from the Council's agenda for 1998, despite a mandate from the World Summit for Social Development and the Council's own willingness to deal with the matter. There was an ever-greater need for strong global institutions, which alone could address the great challenges facing the world. In preparation for the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development and for a possible United Nations world conference on financing for development, the Council should resume its active consideration of new and innovative funding mechanisms.

Ms. von ROEMER (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)) said that the downward trends of production, incomes and employment resulting from the financial crisis in Asia and the implications of those trends for social and political stability were a cause for grave concern. In its

recent statement on building recovery in Asia, the Asian and Pacific Regional Organization of ICFTU had proposed a Social Action Plan for Asia entailing the creation of national tripartite councils to reach agreement on social assistance and job-creation programmes to prevent laid-off workers from falling into long-term unemployment and poverty. It had also urged the establishment of an international commission to examine institutional and policy changes needed for the regulation of international financial markets. The proposals had been presented to the governing bodies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, whose willingness to consider social aspects and the involvement of trade unions was most welcome. In conclusion, he said that the time had come for a positive international strategy for reconstruction.

Mr. GABOURY (World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU)) said that his organization viewed with concern the deteriorating economic situation and its serious social consequences, which were exemplified by the situation in South-East Asia. The current emphasis on deregulation, privatization and a reduced role for the State sector was totally misplaced and could only invite a repetition of the crisis of the 1930s. The liberalization measures which were forcing developing and least developed countries into unequal competition with transnational corporations were of particular concern. WFTU called for a review of the policies that continued to place the burden of the world's economic crisis on the backs of working people and for the full implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action agreed to at the World Summit for Social Development. It also called for work to resume on a code of conduct governing the activities of transnational corporations.

Ms. FREY-WOUTERS (International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS)) said that an estimated 300 million people were suffering from mental and neurological disorders, and over 40 million refugees and internally displaced persons suffered depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder and other forms of mental distress. Approximately 80 per cent of the world's traumatized and mentally disabled population lived in developing countries.

General Assembly resolution 46/119 recognized the need for all people to attain full mental health, and subsequent instruments recognized that mentally disabled persons should enjoy a decent life in conditions that ensured dignity and promoted self-reliance. The contributions of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees and other entities of the United Nations system had been well documented, and recent international conferences had confirmed the commitment of all Member States to the full realization of the highest attainable standards of mental health. Accordingly, ISTSS called for the expansion of training programmes for United Nations personnel, improved cooperation among agencies, strengthening of emergency-preparedness at all levels, and the provision of more services to traumatized help-givers, including United Nations personnel in the field. A major initiative to upgrade the quality of mental health services in the world would be possible only through the strengthening of partnerships within the United Nations system and with non-governmental organizations.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/1998/27 and Corr.1)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft resolutions I to IV contained in Chapter I, section B, of the report.

Draft resolution I was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that a recorded vote had been requested on draft resolution II.

Mr. SHAPIRO (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that parts of the draft resolution were unacceptable because they addressed the status of issues that the parties had agreed would be the subject of direct negotiations in the Middle-East peace process. Other language was one-sided, lacked objectivity and would not advance the status or well-being of women in society, the intended beneficiaries of the resolution. Consequently, his delegation would vote against the draft resolution.

A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution II.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Cuba, Czech Republic, Djibouti, El Salvador, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Guyana, India, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint-Lucia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Viet-Nam.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Colombia, Iceland.

Draft resolution II was adopted by 40 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions.*

Draft resolutions III and IV were adopted.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the draft decision contained in chapter I, section C, of the report.

The draft decision was adopted.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Commission for Social Development (E/1998/26)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft decisions I and II contained in chapter I, section A, of the report.

Draft decisions I and II were adopted.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (E/1998/30 and Corr.1)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the draft resolutions and decisions contained in Chapter I, sections A, B and C, of the report. The programme budget implications of the draft resolutions were contained in annex II to the report.

Draft resolutions I to III contained in chapter I, section A, were adopted.

Draft resolutions I to IX contained in chapter I, section B, were adopted.

Draft decisions I and II contained in chapter I, section C, were adopted.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/1998/28)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the draft resolution and draft decisions contained in chapter I, sections A and B, of the report.

The draft resolution was adopted.

Draft decisions I and II were adopted.

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION (continued)

(a) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION AND THE ROLE OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING, IN PARTICULAR, CAPACITY-BUILDING AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION FOR ENHANCING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/1998/L.20)

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* The delegations of Jordan, Togo and Tunisia subsequently informed the Council that they had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

(c) REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME/UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND AND THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (continued) (E/1998/L.19)

The PRESIDENT said that draft resolutions E/1998/L.20 and L.19 had been submitted under sub-items (a) and (c) respectively, by the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Roble Olhaye of Djibouti, on the basis of informal consultations.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.20 was adopted.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.

UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1998/SR.45
30 June 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session for 1998

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 45th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 29 July 1998, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. OLHAYE (Djibouti)

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(d) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATICS

(e) PROCLAMATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MOUNTAINS

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING JERUSALEM, AND THE ARAB POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN (continued)

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS (continued)

Corrections to this record should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (E/1998/8, E/1998/43 and Corr.1, E/1998/72 and Add.1)

Ms. KELLEY (Secretary of the Council) read out corrections to the English text of document E/1998/72: in paragraph 35, the figure "71" should be replaced by the figure "70" and in the fourth line of paragraph 58, the word "their" should be amended to "each". Turning to the annex to document E/1997/72/Add.1, she announced that the phrase "21-25 September or" should be deleted.

Ms. CLIFFORD (United States of America) said that her delegation disassociated itself from the decision of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to recommend special consultative status for the Unión de Escritores Y Artistas de Cuba and the Organization for the Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAL) because it was not convinced that those organizations were independent entities.

Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon) said that his delegation dissociated itself from the Committee's recommendation of consultative status for EcoPeace-Middle East Environment NGO Forum. The delegation of Lebanon had been absent when the Committee had granted consultative status, and had subsequently discovered that some of the information EcoPeace had submitted was unfounded or questionable. The delegation of Lebanon would ask for EcoPeace's status to be reconsidered at the next meeting of the Committee.

Mr. REYES-RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) expressed his delegation's dismay that the Council's subsidiary organs were still being manipulated on grounds of bilateral political considerations. He wished it made clear in the relevant report that only one delegation had voted against the recommendation to grant special consultative status to the Unión de Escritores Y Artistas de Cuba and the Organization for the Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAL). He urged countries to refrain in future from introducing issues that were unrelated to the technical work of the Council's subsidiary organs.

Mr. BHATTI (Pakistan) said that his delegation wished to dissociate

itself from the consensus on granting general consultative status to the International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies.

Ms. CASTRO DE BARISH (Observer for Costa Rica) said that her delegation wished to dissociate itself from the consensus on granting consultative status to Eagle Forum. In her delegation's opinion, the aims and purposes of that organization were not in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and therefore did not meet the criteria set out in paragraph 2 of Council resolution 1996/31. Nor were they in keeping with the purposes and principles of other United Nations system organizations, specifically the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Her delegation believed that with the prestige and credibility of the United Nations at stake, it could not support a viewpoint that ran counter to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to the aims of the United Nation system in general and UNICEF and the Third Committee in particular that ratification of that Convention should be universal.

Her delegation would not oppose the consensus by a negative vote. The Committee must assume responsibility for its decision to recommend consultative status for Eagle Forum, but Costa Rica would maintain its reservation.

Ms. LUBIN (International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centre (IFSNC)) expressed gratitude for the recommendation to reclassify her organization to the category of general consultative status.

She noted that the work of accreditation had proceeded more swiftly than in previous years, but believed that the credentials of applicant organizations should be examined in greater detail: although the problems some delegations had with some organizations appeared to be mainly political, some of those problems might be the result of inadequate scrutiny of credentials.

She said that the Committee appeared not to have the time to read and digest the reports that non-governmental organizations spent much time and effort writing. She suggested therefore that an inter-sessional subcommittee or other mechanism should be set up to deal with incoming reports.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on its resumed 1997 session (E/1998/8)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on proposed draft decisions I to IV, which had been adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Draft decisions I to IV were adopted.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on the first part of its 1998 session (E/1998/72)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on proposed draft decisions I to III, which had been adopted by the Committee without a vote.

Mr. ARDA (Turkey), speaking in explanation of position on draft decision I, said that his delegation was not part of the consensus because it had serious doubts whether the aims and purposes of the Armenian Relief Society met the criteria set forth in paragraph 2 of Council resolution 1996/31.

The Turkish delegation had submitted to the Committee official publications of the central executive of the Armenian Relief Society, which was based in the United States. Those publications promoted hatred and violence based on ethnicity and religious belief and showed that the Society's aim was the dismemberment of Turkey by force. The Society openly boasted that it had a camp where its instructors promoted terrorism by methods such as re-enacting the attack on the Turkish Embassy in Lisbon in 1983, in which the wife of the Ambassador was murdered by terrorists while trying to save her children. Nor had the Turkish delegation been satisfied with the answers given by the representative of the Society to its questions.

The Turkish delegation believed that the Committee had made a serious mistake in recommending Roster status for the Society and urged other delegations also to watch the Society's every move.

He requested that his explanation of position should be reflected in the Council's report on the current session.

Draft decision I was adopted.

Ms. AGHADJANIAN (Observer for Armenia) said that it had been obvious in the deliberations of the Committee that members had no major concerns about the activities or nature of the Armenian Relief Society, which had appeared to be in full compliance with the established criteria.

Mr. ARDA (Turkey), speaking on a point of order, objected that the Observer for Armenia had been speaking while Council was in the process of voting and that Council members alone had the right to express their positions or votes either before or after action had been taken.

Ms. AGHADJANIAN (Observer for Armenia) said that the Committee had thoroughly studied the application from the Armenian Relief Society, the documentation provided by the Turkish delegation and the answers provided by the

representative of the Society. Also, the decision to recommend granting the Society Roster status had been taken without a vote.

The activities of the Society were purely humanitarian and the false allegations of links with terrorism or terrorist groups were nothing more than attempts to distract the Council.

Draft decisions II and III were adopted.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations on the second part of its 1998 session (E/1998/72/Add.1)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on proposed draft decisions I and II, which had been adopted by the Committee without a vote. He drew attention to the programme budget implications of draft decision II as reflected in the annex to the report.

Draft decisions I and II were adopted.

The PRESIDENT proposed that the Council should take note of reports E/1998/8, reports E/1998/72 and Add.1 as orally revised, and reports E/1998/43 and Corr.1.

It was so decided.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS (continued)

Draft resolution E/1998/L.25 and Corr.1

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) announced that Azerbaijan, Benin, the Central African Republic, Djibouti, the Gambia, Mongolia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Viet Nam should be added to the list of sponsors given in document E/1998/L.25/Corr.1.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the proposed draft resolution entitled "International Year of Microcredit, 2005", which had no programme budget implications.

The draft resolution, as orally revised, was adopted.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS:

(d) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATICS

Draft resolution E/1998/L.16

The PRESIDENT informed the Council that the draft resolution before it, entitled "The need to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States", had been submitted on the basis of informal consultations and had no programme budget implications.

The draft resolution was adopted.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS:

(e) PROCLAMATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF MOUNTAINS

Draft resolution E/1998/L.21

The PRESIDENT announced that New Zealand and Portugal should be added to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution entitled "Proclamation of an international year of mountains", and informed the Council that the draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

Ms. ESHMAMBETOVA (Observer for Kyrgyzstan), speaking on behalf of the sponsors, called on the Council to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The draft resolution, as orally revised, was adopted.

Ms. KEPPLER-SCHLESINGER (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that under the relevant resolutions of the Council and of the General Assembly, the proclamation of an international year or other anniversary should add value and have the potential to raise public awareness on a subject of major international concern. There should also be clarity about the what contribution the United Nations was called upon to make.

With the streamlining of the Council's agenda, the General Assembly would from 1999 be handling proposals for international years and other anniversaries directly. The European Union understood that the same guidelines would still apply.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS:

(f) INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE, 2000

Draft resolution E/1998/L.14/Rev.1

The PRESIDENT announced that Angola, Benin, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Malawi, Nepal, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay had joined the sponsors of draft resolution E/1998/L.14/Rev.1 on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). The draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

Ms. KEPPLER-SCHLESINGER (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that while the Union supported the promotion of a culture of peace, it was not convinced that the decade being proposed would be the most effective way to achieve that goal.

During the consultations on the draft resolution, the Union had raised the

question whether the draft was in line with the Council's guidelines on the proclamation of international years and decades. It appeared that a new concept of "a culture of peace and non-violence" was being introduced even though the Council had not yet completed its consideration of the concept of "a culture of peace". The Union considered the addition to be unnecessary, since "non-violence" as one of the possible means to achieve peace was already included in the concept of "a culture of peace" and its inclusion in the title on the same footing as "a culture of peace" could interfere with the broader concept. Those concerns notwithstanding, the Union would join in the consensus on the text.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.14/Rev.1 was adopted.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING JERUSALEM, AND THE ARAB POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN (continued) (E/1998/L.26)

Draft resolution E/1998/L.26

The PRESIDENT announced that Colombia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco and Oman had joined the sponsors of draft resolution E/1998/L.26 on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. A recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution, which had no programme budget implications.

Mr. SOUTHWICK (United States of America), speaking in explanation of vote before the vote, said that the United States Government would continue to oppose references in resolutions which stated or implied Arab or Palestinian sovereignty over Jerusalem and territories that were the subject of direct negotiations between the parties to the conflict. Such references had no effect whatsoever on issues of sovereignty and inappropriately prejudged the permanent political arrangements that could be determined only through the direct negotiations to which the parties had committed themselves.

His delegation agreed with the substance of paragraph 6, which stressed the importance of the work of the organizations and agencies of the United Nations, and of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the occupied Territories. That work had been instrumental in advancing the economic and developmental goals of the peace process.

With reference to paragraph 7, the United States and many others had made

strong efforts to encourage foreign investment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and it endorsed the sense of the paragraph that private foreign investment was essential to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

His delegation regretted that, despite those positive elements, the resolution contained unacceptable language. The Council should be taking actions to encourage direct exchanges between the parties, which were essential to move the peace process forward, rather than undermining them. To be of genuine assistance to the Middle East peace process, the Council must look forward, not backward, and dedicate itself to supporting the work of the negotiating parties. On both of those counts, the draft resolution failed and the United States would therefore vote against it.

At the request of the representative of the United States of America, a recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Djibouti, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Guyana, Iceland, India, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom, viet Nam.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: None.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.26 was adopted by 44 votes to 1.

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation), speaking in explanation of vote after the vote, said that the Russian Federation shared the grave concern expressed in the resolution about the deterioration of economic and living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory. It was also concerned about the lack of progress in the peace process, since a solution to the problems described in the resolution was possible only through implementation of the agreements which the parties had reached.

The PRESIDENT proposed that the Council should take note of the note of the Secretary-General transmitting the report prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) entitled "Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the

Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan", which was contained in document A/53/163-E/1998/79.

It was so decided.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS (continued) (E/1998/L.33)

Draft decision E/1998/L.33

Mr. CHOMAR (Mozambique), speaking on behalf of the African States, introduced draft decision E/1998/L.33 on the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. He said that the report highlighted the causes of conflict in Africa and the linkage between durable peace and sustainable development. He therefore recommended the draft decision for adoption by the Council.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

E/1998/SR.46
30 June 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session for 1998

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 46th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Thursday, 30 July 1998, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh)
(Vice-President)

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(a) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS (continued) (E/1998/59)

(a) ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (continued) (E/1998/L.36)*

(d) NARCOTIC DRUGS (continued) (E/1998/28)

(f) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE THIRD DECADE TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (E/1998/51)

(g) HUMAN RIGHTS (E/1998/18, 22, 49, 74, 84 and 94; E/1998/L.4 and L.24; E/1998/NGO/4)

Ms. ANDAYANI (Observer for Indonesia), introducing draft resolution E/1998/L.36* on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the draft resolution was an attempt to address the financial difficulties of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and to reflect the importance which her delegation attached to research on the role of women in development. The Director of the Institute, in collaboration with the Board of Trustees and other relevant parties, should draw up a strategy and comprehensive work plan to enable it to attract additional financing from a variety of sources, without prejudice to its autonomy. She trusted that the Council would adopt the draft resolution by consensus and that Member States would provide the additional funding required.

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on draft decision III contained in the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (E/1998/28, chap. I).

Draft decision III was adopted.

Ms. STAMATOPOULOU (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (E/1998/51), said that at its fifty-fourth session the Commission on Human Rights, after expressing regret at the lack of interest in and financial resources for that Programme, had suggested that the General Assembly should consider other means of financing the Programme, including from the regular budget. It had recommended that the activities of the Programme should

focused on the preparatory process for the World Conference against Racism.

In connection with that Conference, the Commission had decided to create an open-ended working group to review and formulate proposals for its preparation. The Commission had recommended that the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be designated by the General Assembly as Secretary-General of the Conference and should consult with States to determine a date and venue for it.

Both the Subcommission and CERD had indicated their intention to participate actively in the preparations for the Conference. The Subcommission had expressed the view that the Conference should be an opportunity, not only for developing strategies to combat racism and racial discrimination, but also for examining the interplay between racial and other types of discrimination. CERD had established a contact group to discuss with the Commission and the Office of the High Commissioner (UNHCHR) its input to preparations for the Conference. The Commission had invited CERD to undertake a serie of studies to assist the preparations for the Conference and to submit them prior to the fifty-fifth session of the Commission.

CERD and the Subcommission would review at their August 1998 sessions a joint working paper on article 7 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination which had been prepared by experts of CERD and the Subcommission.

The report (E/1998/51) summarized the commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 20 March 1998 and recent activities undertaken by UNHCHR. She drew the Council's attention to the expert seminar held at the United Nations Office in Geneva from 10 to 14 November 1997 on the role of the Internet in the light of the provisions of the Convention. Experts at that seminar had concluded that the Internet was being abused by racist groups, in contravention of the provisions of the Convention, and that States parties to the Convention should take appropriate steps to stop those activities.

A Racism Project Team had been established by UNHCHR in March 1998 to coordinate all activities related to racism. The Team would also promote liaison with other United Nations bodies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

The report summarized information received from other United Nations programmes and specialized agencies as well as from Governments and

intergovernmental organizations. She drew particular attention to an initiative of the Council of Europe, which, through the secretariat of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), had launched an Internet site to combat racism and intolerance. ECRI had taken an innovative country-specific approach, resulting in the publication on its Internet site of in-depth analyses of the problems of racism and intolerance in various countries. The Council of Europe had also indicated its intention to contribute to the preparations for the Conference by organizing a major event similar to those organized for the World Conference on Human Rights and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Introducing the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (E/1998/84), which summarized developments since the comprehensive report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session, she said that, in addition to reviewing activities for the fiftieth Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, it provided an overview of other notable activities, discussed the outcome of the most recent session of the Commission on Human Rights and analyzed the growing emphasis being placed on strengthening national human rights capacities and integrating human rights throughout the United Nations system.

A notable step forward at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights had been the adoption of a draft declaration on the right and responsibility of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. The adoption of that declaration by the General Assembly would be a most fitting contribution to the fiftieth anniversary year.

Mr. AMMARIN (Jordan)* said that he was speaking on behalf of 51 delegations which wished to record their dissociation from Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/8 on the question of the death penalty. There was no international consensus on the abolition of capital punishment, as illustrated by previous joint statements in the Council on the same issue. A balance must be achieved between the rights of convicted persons and those of victims and of societies to live in peace and security. It was inappropriate to take decisions in international forums on matters that were for sovereign States alone to decide.

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* The full text of this statement will be issued as document E/1998/95.

Mr. KAMITANI (Japan), referring to the Secretary-General's report on implementation of the Programme of Action for the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination (E/1998/51), noted with considerable surprise, that Japan had been the only State to contribute in 1996 and 1997 to the Trust Fund for the Programme of Action. He further noted that Japan and Turkey had been the only contributors in 1998. It would take time to secure the additional funding needed both to implement the Programme of Action and to prepare for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in the year 2001. His delegation appealed to all Member States to contribute, as a sign of their commitment to activities to combat racism and racial discrimination.

Ms. TAN (Observer for Singapore) said that Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/8 on the question of the death penalty did not accurately reflect the views of the international community as a whole. The voting record of the resolution showed that not only was there no international consensus on the abolition of the death penalty but support for the resolution had actually declined since 1997. Singapore had dissociated itself from the resolution, because it represented a significant departure from established norms and international practice. International law did not prohibit capital punishment. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights explicitly recognized the right of countries to impose capital punishment for the most serious crimes. Further, the resolution was unbalanced. The "right to life" of convicted prisoners had to be balanced against the "right to life" and the "security of persons" of the victims. Experience had shown that capital punishment preserved and safeguarded the law and order interests of society.

Eleven delegations had formally dissociated themselves from Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/77 on the question of conscientious objection to military service. They had done so because the resolution went beyond what was prescribed in international law and applicable human rights instruments. While the resolution referred to conscientious objection to military service as the legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, it failed to mention that both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognized limitations on the exercise of those rights and freedoms with respect to the need to ensure public safety and the rights and freedoms of others. National

defence was a fundamental sovereign right under international law. Where individual beliefs or actions ran counter to such a right, the right of a State to preserve the security of a nation had to prevail. Compulsory military service was vital to the national security of a small country like Singapore. Further, the principle of equality before the law had to be upheld. By making exceptions for particular groups with regard to compulsory military service, that principle would be undermined.

Mr. MUKHOPADHAYA (India) said that the death penalty was imposed only in very rare cases in India. The presiding judge had to justify the sentence, which required confirmation by a superior court. The accused had a right of appeal both to higher courts and to the Governor of the State or the President of India. There were special provisions for suspension of the death penalty in the case of pregnant women and juvenile offenders. If execution of the sentence was severely delayed, the sentence could be commuted to life imprisonment.

India had not abolished the death penalty, however, and believed that any such decision was a matter for individual States, which should take account of international standards and agreements.

Mr. TALBOT (Guyana) said that his delegation wished to firmly underline its dissociation from Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/8 on the question of the death penalty. Such decisions were a sovereign prerogative and could not be imposed on States by international bodies.

Mr. REYES RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) drew attention to Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1998/11 on human rights and unilateral coercive measures and 1998/46 on the composition of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Council would not take action on those resolutions at the current session, yet both resolutions called for reports from UNHCHR and for action by the Secretary-General and therefore had budget implications. He wanted to know what criteria had been used for deciding whether resolutions should be submitted to the Council.

His delegation deplored the fact that the Council was being forced to consider a report that had not been issued as an official document. The Commission on Human Rights was a subsidiary body of the Council whose work it was the Council's responsibility to coordinate and oversee. At the very least, the Council should be able to examine the results of the work carried out by its subsidiary bodies.

In 1996 the Council had been forced to adopt a draft resolution based on a report it had not seen. At least, however, it had had the text of the draft resolution before it. At the current session, it was being asked to take action on a draft decision (Commission on Human Right draft decision 1) and did not have before it the text of the resolution to which that draft decision referred. His delegation very much hoped that there would be no recurrence of that situation at future sessions.

Ms. STAMATOPOULOU (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that resolutions 1998/11 and 1998/46 had no budgetary implications.

Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon) and Mr. UBALIJORO (Observer for Rwanda) said that they shared Cuba's concerns about the documentation before the Council. UNHCHR should respond to those concerns, so that the Council could avoid such problems in the future.

Ms. STAMATOPOULO (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) said that UNHCHR would provide a response at the earliest juncture.

Recommendations contained in the extract from the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its fifty-fourth session (E/1998/L.24)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to take action on the draft resolutions and draft decisions recommended by the Commission on Human Rights in document E/1998/L.24.

Draft resolutions I to III were adopted.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 1.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, El Salvador, Guyana, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Turkey, Viet Nam.

Against: Belgium, Canada, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Nicaragua, Poland, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Belarus, Czech Republic, France, Latvia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Romania.

Draft decision 1 was adopted by 26 votes to 13, with 7 abstentions.*

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 2.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, El Salvador, Guyana, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Viet Nam.

Against: Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Cape Verde, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Latvia, Republic of Korea.

Draft decision 2 was adopted by 26 votes to 20, with 2 abstentions.*

Draft decisions 4 to 8 were adopted.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 9.

In favour: Algeria, Bangladesh, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, Guyana, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Viet Nam.

Against: Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Republic of Korea.

Draft decision 9 was adopted by 22 votes to 19, with 7 abstentions.

Draft decisions 10 to 19 were adopted.

Mr. TAKAHASHI (Japan), speaking with reference to draft decision 20, said that, as a current member of the Security Council, Japan subscribed to the statement made by the President of the Security Council on 13 July 1998 concerning the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the

* The delegation of Nicaragua subsequently informed the Council that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Congo. His delegation regretted that the Secretary-General's investigative team had not been allowed to carry out its mission fully and without hindrance. However, it welcomed the announcement of 19 May 1998 by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with regard to its emphasis on policies to promote human rights, improve the judicial system and appoint a Minister responsible for human rights, and it strongly hoped that those measures would be carried out as soon as possible. The Government of Japan believed that democratization, good governance, respect for human rights and appropriate humanitarian measures for refugees would contribute to the stable development of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and was prepared to assist the Government in its efforts in those areas.

Draft decision 20 was adopted.

Mr. RWUBUSISI (Observer for the Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/61, to which decision 20 referred, was the result of an erroneous, if not imaginary, report that had no basis in fact. The Security Council had already considered the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and had requested the Government of that country to submit an interim report to the Secretary-General. To ensure that the many positive developments in that country were taken into account, the United Nations should avoid requesting multiple entities to look into the situation and instead should entrust that responsibility to the Secretary-General alone.

His Government had formally expressed its willingness to cooperate with the United Nations system, in particular by agreeing to end the culture of impunity. It had already established a Ministry of Human Rights, and it would appreciate material support and technical assistance from the United Nations for the reconstruction of its legal system so that all individuals involved in alleged human rights violations could be brought to justice.

The stability of the Great Lakes region and of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must be preserved. Attempts to undermine the Governments of the region through resolutions based on imaginary allegations would only compromise efforts to reinforce that stability. The Security Council had asked the international community to assist his country in compensating and rehabilitating victims of war and of human rights violations. His Government welcomed programmes to reduce ethnic tensions and to promote equal rights for all. It

was convinced that such assistance would help the people, who had lived under a virtual international embargo since 1991, to gain access to fundamental rights such as food, drinking water, high-quality health care, education and security of person and property. Once acquired, those rights would reduce the conflicts that ravaged the region and would create the conditions necessary for political and economic stability.

Draft decisions 21 and 22 were adopted.

Mr. AL-HUMAIMIDI (Observer for Iraq), speaking with reference to draft decision 23, said that Iraq's delegation had tried in vain to inject some balance and impartiality into the provisions of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/65 on the situation of human rights in Iraq. Its efforts had been rejected out of hand, for political reasons that had nothing to do with human rights. The resulting resolution was a combination of false and subjective accusations and assertions that did not stand up to reason or logical analysis. For example, the resolution called on Iraq to cease immediately its repressive practices aimed at the Iraqi Kurds in the north (1998/65, para. 3 (h)). Yet, the whole world knew that the area in question been under United States and United Kingdom occupation since 1991 and Iraq no longer had a military or administrative apparatus there. Indeed, the United States Assistant Secretary of State and State Department officials had recently visited northern Iraq, illegally entering the area through Turkey. In such a situation, it was hard to see how Iraq could carry out the actions to which the resolution referred.

There was no logical basis or justification for the resolution, which took no account of the genocide inflicted on the people of Iraq by eight years of sanctions. The sponsors should have mentioned the impact of the sanctions on Iraq, including the deaths of over one and a half million children, instead of which they had followed a political agenda, being driven by Western Powers, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, against Iraq. The Council should reject the resolution for that reason.

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America), responding to the statement by the representative of Iraq, noted that at the same time the Iraqi authorities were decrying the effects of Security Council resolutions, they had also submitted a request to the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait to import $733

million worth of dinnerware.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 23.

In favour: Argentina, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Guyana, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Algeria, Bangladesh, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Mozambique, Pakistan, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, Togo, Tunisia, Viet Nam.

Draft decision 23 was adopted by 28 votes to 0, with 17 abstentions.

Draft decisions 24 to 32 were adopted.

Mr. ROGOV (Russian Federation), said that his delegation's joining the consensus on draft decision 32 in no way indicated a change of its position with regard to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/79.

Mr. AFSHARI (Observer for the Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting on draft decision 33, said that the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had recognized the need to enhance international cooperation in the field of human rights on the basis of dialogue and transparency. It was imperative that the United Nations human rights machinery should exert every effort to facilitate dialogue and cooperation. The Islamic Republic of Iran had been prepared to cooperate in good faith with the United Nations human rights procedures and mechanisms and had consistently endeavoured to build a constructive process with a view to placing the whole issue in its proper context and exploring mutually accepted formulas. The new Government accorded a high priority to the promotion and protection of human rights in line with its Constitution and with Islamic values and was taking many initiatives to further institutionalize the rule of law and respect for human rights. At the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights, the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran had made sincere efforts to work closely with the sponsors of the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Iran with a view to arriving at a consensus, but the sponsors' partial and selective approach had prevented such a consensus from emerging. Since the

text of the resolution reflected that subjective attitude and uncooperative approach, his delegation called on members of the Council to refrain from supporting the decision under consideration.

Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon), speaking in explanation of vote before the voting on draft decision 33, said that since the election of a new Government in the Islamic Republic of Iran there had been encouraging developments with regard to human rights and the principles of democracy. As it was the duty of the international community to encourage that Government to continue its current policies, his delegation would not participate in the vote on the draft decision under consideration.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 33.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Finland, France, Germany, Guyana, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against: Bangladesh, China, Cuba, India, Jordan, Oman, Pakistan, Viet Nam.

Abstaining: Belarus, Cape Verde, Colombia, Djibouti, Mexico, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, Togo, Tunisia.

Draft decision 33 was adopted by 25 votes to 8, with 11 abstentions.

Draft decisions 34 and 35 were adopted.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 36.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, El Salvador, Guyana, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Viet Nam.

Against: Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, New Zealand, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining: Poland.

Draft decision 36 was adopted by 28 votes to 18, with 1 abstention.

Draft decision 37 was adopted.

Mr. AMMARIN (Jordan), supported by Mr. HAMDAN (Lebanon), said the fact that the Special Rapporteur on human rights and population transfer had submitted three reports should be noted in draft decision 38 and the word "final" should be deleted from the fourth line, along with the document symbol for the report in question.

Mr. THEUERMANN (Observer for Austria) said that his delegation would prefer the wording adopted by the Commission to be retained.

Mr. HYNES (Canada) agreed with the observer for Austria, as the proposed amendment could have additional financial implications.

The PRESIDENT said that action on draft decision 38 would be postponed to allow those questions to be clarified.

Mr. MARTINEZ-AGUILAR (Mexico), speaking with reference to draft decision 39, said that, while his Government recognized that terrorist acts affected the promotion and protection of human rights, it did not believe that the proposed study would further the fight against terrorism. Since terrorist acts were criminal, they should be prosecuted by the legal system of the affected State.

A recorded vote was taken on draft decision 39.

In favour: Algeria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, El Salvador, Guyana, India, Lesotho, Mozambique, Oman, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Sri Lanka, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Viet Nam.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Draft decision 39 was adopted by 23 votes to none, with 22 abstentions.

Draft decisions 40 to 42 were adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that the dates of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights, scheduled for 15 March to 23 April 1999, would be reflected in the calendar of conferences, which would come before the Council for adoption before the end of its session.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that for the first time in seven years the

Council had been spared the politically-motivated exercise, imposed on it by the United States of America, of considering the so-called situation of human rights in Cuba. The Commission's decision to end that extraordinary exercise and to terminate the work of the Special Rapporteur was an outcome that transcended one country and its particular situation: it stood as an endorsement of the willingness for dialogue. Democracy and consensus could exist only when accompanied by respect for different opinions.

His delegation wished to make it clear that it would not accept the re-imposition of any discriminatory human rights procedure or mechanism and expected the international community to avert any attempt at a return to the past.

In conclusion, he reiterated Cuba's readiness to engage in dialogue and multilateral and bilateral cooperation with all States on the basis of mutual respect and the Charter principles of universality, indivisibility, objectivity and non-selectivity. The noble cause of human rights should not be held hostage to political interests, and in the future Cuba hoped that dialogue would prevail over confrontation.

Mr. THEUERMANN (Observer for Austria), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union followed very closely the human rights situation in the countries under review by the Commission on Human Rights. It had expressed itself publicly on numerous occasions concerning a number of those situations. Since Council had been asked to endorse in procedural terms the extension or establishment of thematic and country mandates, it had not made substantive statements on the merits of specific situations, but it would continue to express itself on those issues at the fifty-third session of the General, Assembly. With respect to the death penalty, the Union would work to strengthen international activities towards its universal abolition and, where it still existed, would call for restrictions or a moratorium on its use.

Finally, he said it was regrettable that the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its fifty-fourth session had not been available to the Council, given the importance of adequate documentation to its work.

Recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions and programme budget implications thereto (E/1998/22 and L.4)

The PRESIDENT drew attention to the recommendations contained in the

report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (E/1998/22) and reminded the Council that it had decided to postpone consideration of those recommendations at its 1997 session.

Mr. HYNES (Canada) said that, while his delegation was sympathetic to the requests the Committee was making and did not want to delay the consideration unduly, updated proposals were needed before the Council could responsibly take action.

The PRESIDENT said that consideration of that matter would be postponed pending the results of informal consultations.

COORDINATION, PROGRAMME AND OTHER QUESTIONS (continued)

(b) MALARIA AND DIARRHOEAL DISEASES, IN PARTICULAR CHOLERA (continued) (E/1998/L.30 and L.37)

(f) INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE, 2000 (continued) (E/1998/L.31 and L.38)

The PRESIDENT said that draft resolution E/1998/L.37 had no programme budget implications. In paragraph 11, the words "in collaboration with the Director-General of the World Health Organization and" should be replaced with the words "by the Director-General of the World Health Organization in collaboration with".

Draft resolution E/1998/L.37, as orally revised, was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the sponsors of draft resolution E/1998/L.30 wished to withdraw it, in the light of the adoption of resolution E/1998/L.37.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said that draft resolution E/1998/L.38 had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.38 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the sponsors of draft resolution E/1998/L.31 wished to withdraw it, in the light of the adoption of resolution E/1998/L.38.

It was so decided.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/53/153-E/1998/75; E/1998/L.22)

Mr. BENÍTEZ VERSÓN (Cuba) said that Algeria, Colombia, Grenada, India,

Lebanon, Namibia and Togo should be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution E/1998/L.22.

A recorded vote was taken on draft resolution E/1998/L.22.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Djibouti, El Salvador, Guyana, India, Lesotho, Mexico, Mozambique, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Viet Nam.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.22 was adopted by 24 votes to none, with 19 abstentions.*

Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had abstained from voting because the issue of decolonization was being discussed by the General Assembly. The Council's consideration of that purely political issue diverted its attention from its primary function of coordinating United Nations activities in the economic and social fields.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to take note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people, contained in document A/53/153-E/1998/75.

It was so decided.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS (continued) (E/1998/L.33)

(a) SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/1998/L.27-L.29, L.34 and L.39)

The PRESIDENT said that draft decision E/1998/L.33 had no programme budget implications. The phrase "taking into account views expressed by Governments during the discussion of the report of the Secretary-General at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly" should be added at the end of the last paragraph of the draft decision.

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America) said that his delegation wished to join the list of sponsors of the draft decision.

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* The delegation of Lebanon subsequently informed the Council that it had intended to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Draft decision E/1998/L.33, as orally revised, was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that draft resolution E/1998/L.39 had no programme budget implications.

Mr. HAPSORO (Observer for Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that draft resolution E/1998/L.39 was well-balanced and took into account the concerns of the parties involved. He hoped that, at its next session, the Committee for Development Planning would make the assessment mentioned in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.39 was adopted.

Mr. RAVOU-AKII (Observer for Vanuatu) said that he fully supported the statement made by the Observer for Indonesia. The resolution would give experts the flexibility they needed to carry out the work recommended in the Barbados Programme of Action.

Mr. WINNICK (United States of America) said that his delegation had joined the consensus on the resolution just adopted because the Committee for Development Planning had hot submitted its views on the usefulness of a vulnerability index, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/210. However, he was still concerned about the many methodological problems associated with the formulation and application of a meaningful vulnerability index. His Government used the Organization's list of least developed countries in determining which countries should benefit from its generalized system of preferences. However, it would have to reconsider the use of that list if the current robust methodology for designating least developed countries was changed in a manner that undermined the strength of its analysis.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the sponsors of draft resolution E/1998/L.27 wished to withdraw it, in the light of the adoption of resolution E/1998/L.39.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said that, in the first line of paragraph 5 of draft resolution E/1998/L.28, the words "all relevant entities of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as" should be inserted after the words "in cooperation with".

Mr. CABACTULAN (Observer for the Philippines) said he understood that an agreement had been reached in informal consultations to insert the words "and tolerance" after the words "fostering better understanding" in the penultimate

preambular paragraph of the draft resolution. In addition, Australia, New Zealand, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan wished to join the list of sponsors.

Mr. ÖZÜGERGIN (Turkey) said that he, too, had understood that that change was to be made to the penultimate preambular paragraph. His delegation also wished to join the list of sponsors.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.28, as orally revised, was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said that draft resolution E/1998/L.34 had no programme budget implications.

Draft resolution E/1998/L.34 was adopted.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the sponsors of draft resolution E/1998/L.29 wished to withdraw it, in the light of the adoption of resolution E/1998/L.34.

It was so decided.

Statements in exercise of the right of reply

Mr. SHAPIRO (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement of the representative of Cuba had called into question the motives of his delegation in sponsoring the draft resolution on the situation of human rights in Cuba. The United States would continue to be concerned about the repression practised by the last dictatorship in the Western hemisphere. The time had come for change.

Mr. REYES RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said that Cuba's earlier statement had been made in a constructive and friendly spirit intended to foster dialogue and that the reply by the United States delegation had shown arrogance and lack of imagination. The competent United Nations human rights bodies had already made a determination concerning the full exercise of human rights in Cuba. On the other hand, the reports of the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as news reports concerning police brutality, had raised questions about the human rights situation in the United States.

Under its policy of hostility towards Cuba, the United States had not only waged an economic war and used food and medicine as instruments of genocide; it had also financed and organized terrorist operations and internal subversion against the Cuban Government. Cuba had never had a situation of massive and systematic human rights violations that would have justified the appointment of

a Special Rapporteur. The entire exercise had been a clumsy act of political manipulation and a glaring example of the double standard applied in United States policy. The United States delegation's attempt to call into question the recent decision of the Commission on Human Rights opened a new chapter in its policy of manipulating human rights mechanisms for political ends, seriously disrupting procedures and undermining the authority of United Nations bodies. Nonetheless, Cuba trusted that those efforts would be defeated by the international community's resolve and by its own willingness to engage in dialogue.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.